

City Council
April 25, 2022

A City of Waxahachie City Council Retreat was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, Crape Myrtle Room, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie, Texas on Monday, April 25, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.

Council Members Present: Doug Barnes, Mayor, Council Member Place 2
Billie Wallace, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member Place 4
David Hill, Council Member Place 1
Melissa Olson, Council Member Place 3
Travis Smith, Council Member Place 5

Others Present: Michael Scott, City Manager
Albert Lawrence, Deputy City Manager
Shon Brooks, Executive Director of Development Services
Gumaro Martinez, Executive Director Park & Leisure Services
Richard Abernethy, Director of Administrative Services
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Doug Barnes called the meeting to order and thanked City staff for their work in preparing the presentations for the retreat.

City Manager Michael Scott thanked everyone for their attendance noting the goal of the meeting is to provide departmental updates and interactive discussion with City Council and to discuss potential mid-year requests for future City Council approval.

2. Presentation and discussion from Finance Department regarding 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and Bonds

Chad Tustison, Finance Director, reviewed the following:

- Financial Best Practices and Policies
- Overview of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Funding Strategies and Debt Management
- Next steps: Budget, Bond Issuance

Mr. Tustison reviewed the general (streets and parks), water, and wastewater projects to be included in the proposed FY 2023 (and 2022 bond issuance) bond plan.

Council Members discussed projects currently on the 5-year CIP Plan. Council Member Melissa Olson and Council Member Travis Smith recommended postponing the North Grove Community Park to move up other priority projects on the plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Billie Wallace spoke in support of prioritizing moving towards an ISO 1 rating.

After a lengthy discussion, it was the consensus to prioritize the purchase of Fire Truck 1 replacement, through the FY 23 proposed bond, and support the additional personnel needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Wallace requested review of certification pay for employees.

Council Member Olson requested beginning the FY 23 Budget with the no-new revenue rate and add additional projects as needed. Mr. Tustison explained the proposed budget will be based on the current tax rate of \$.66 due to the CIP plan; however, the budget can be constructed on the rate directed by City Council.

Mr. Scott explained with the 7% rate of inflation and the 3.5% maximum rate allowed by the State, the City is already behind on funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Wallace noted she is in favor of a possible tax rate reduction as long as it does not reduce city services.

Council Member David Hill explained a \$.01 tax reduction would only save a citizen about \$35 a year on a \$300,000 home; however, it would reduce the funding available for repairing infrastructure. He noted the City as a whole needs to be looked at and a minimum reduction of the tax rate would not be for the betterment of the city as a whole. Council Member Smith concurred.

Mayor Barnes noted City staff will review preliminary appraisals and make a recommendation to City Council. Mr. Tustison explained a reduction in the rate will affect city services and future CIP projects.

Mr. Scott recapped confirming Council supports moving forward with the proposed FY 23 bond plan and current tax rate noting staff will look at limitations with a reduced tax rate.

3. Hear and discuss departmental updates:

- Civic Center Director April Ortiz reviewed restroom/dressing room renovations.

Council Member Smith asked staff to examine expansion options for the Civic Center.

- Laurie Mosley, Director of Convention & Visitor's Bureau, reviewed Railyard Park programming, advertising and media, and annual events.
- Amy Borders, Director of Communications & Marketing, reviewed current and updated ways of public outreach, refreshed ads, banners, signage, and the Crossroads of Texas Music Festival.

It was the consensus of City Council to move forward with a digital City newsletter due to significant increase in cost of printed mailing and growth. A digital newsletter will allow for a greater frequency of distribution.

- Brad Barnes, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation, reviewed the progress of the Lions Park Master Plan, Penn Park Pool, Dog Park, Farmers Market improvements, and Cemetery restoration.

- James Villarreal, Assistant Director of Sports Complex, reviewed turf improvements phase 2, wrought iron fencing installment, lightning detector, and running track improvements.
- Richard Abernethy, Director of Administrative Services, reviewed the City Hall Annex, proposed City Hall renovations, City Hall security assessment, and the functionality of future Municipal Court software.

Council Member Smith and Council Member Olson expressed their concerns with proceeding with the City Hall renovations so closely to the City Hall Annex project due to cost. Council Member Smith requested options for the City Hall renovations. Mr. Scott noted staff will present a contract for City Hall space assessment and planning.

Council discussed City Council briefings and it was the consensus to hold briefings in the Council Chamber, prior to regular meetings, without streaming.

- Chris Cunningham, Unified Connexions, reviewed updates to the City fiber network expansion, cyber security training, and two-factor authentication.

4. Recess at approximately 5:00 p.m. until Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 3:45 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2022.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 26, 2022.

- Fire Chief Ricky Boyd reviewed the construction timeline for Fire Station No. 4/Engine 4.
- Police Chief Wade Goolsby provided an update on the animal shelter feasibility study, crisis response specialist, and solicitor permit process.

Council Member Smith expressed his support for keeping the animal shelter away from residential neighborhoods and outside of the city. Mayor Pro Tem Wallace and Council Member Olson expressed their support for keeping the shelter within the city for visibility and accessibility.

It was the consensus of Council to bring forward the request of a Kennel Attendant for approval at a future meeting.

It was the consensus of Council to bring forward an amended Solicitation Ordinance for approval at a future meeting to address the online renewal process and distribution of handbills.

Lindsey Mearns, Senior Human Resources Director, reviewed the need of a compensation study and reported on employee engagement initiatives.

Mayor Pro Tem Wallace requested the evaluation of increasing longevity pay and certification. Council Member Olson requested the evaluation of bilingual pay.

It was the consensus of Council to move forward with Phase 1 of the compensation study beginning with field positions from Parks, Utilities, and Public Works.

Deputy City Manager Albert Lawrence expressed his support for prioritizing competitive pay to attract and retain quality employees to continue with a high level of service for citizens. Mr. Scott concurred noting many cities are experiencing the problem of attracting and retaining employees in this highly competitive job market.

- Jennifer Pruitt, Director of Planning, provided an update on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan, GIS measures, and zoning trends.
- Brandon Lacy, Assistant Director of Utilities, introduced Johnny Partain, Utilities Engineer. Mr. Lacy reviewed various water and wastewater infrastructure improvement projects and the necessity of updating the Wastewater Collection Masterplan.

Mr. Scott explained staff will be requesting a mid-year adjustment to add two Utility Manager positions to assist the Utilities Department. It was the consensus of Council to bring forward the mid-year personnel request for approval at a future meeting.

- James Gaertner, Director of Public Works & Engineering, reviewed the Waxahachie Creek Floodplain Study update and Waxahachie Drainage Master Plan update. Mr. Gaertner also reviewed the CIP 5-year plan, including asphalt rehabilitation project and sidewalk project.
- Shon Brooks, Executive Director of Development Services, updated the Council on the status of the Building and Community Services Director and reviewed department performance metrics/volumes/timing of permits.
- Warren Kettelman, Director of Economic Development, reviewed sales tax revenue, the status of the Wynne Jackson project, downtown development projects, and the old Baylor site.
- Thomas Griffith, Emergency Management Coordinator, reviewed the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, training initiatives, and future planning of department.

Mr. Scott recapped City Council's direction for staff to research the following items:

- Certification pay for all employees, longevity pay increase, and Phase 1 of Compensation Study
- Proceed with purchase of Fire Truck 1 in CIP Plan, including phasing in staffing
- Prepare budget with current tax rate and show impact of reducing rate by \$.01
- Expansion of Civic Center
- Postpone long-term improvements at City Hall until spacing assessment
- After additional discussion, City Council decided to hold Briefings in the Council Conference Room with additional police presence
- Professional Services Agreement for City Hall spacing
- Digital City Newsletter with printed options available for pick up at City Hall
- New Animal Shelter facility and proceed with new Kennel Attendant position
- Amend Solicitation Ordinance to include online renewal process and address handbill distribution
- Proceed with adding two Utility Manager positions and updating the Wastewater Collection Masterplan after completion of the Comprehensive Plan
- Street improvement of Kelly Bend near Fire Station 4

Mr. Scott thanked City staff for their work and professionalism.

Council Member Smith requested Council action on a tree preservation ordinance and a policy for naming facilities.

Council Member Olson, Mayor Pro Tem Wallace, and Council Member Hill thanked City staff for their work on presenting a mid-year update to City Council and noted they appreciated the open dialogue amongst City Council.

Mayor Barnes thanked staff for their expertise noting the goals of the City is to serve its citizens and improve the quality of life.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary